



# Department of Defense **DIRECTIVE**

March 29, 1996  
NUMBER 5122.5

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DA&M

SUBJECT : Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD (PA) )

References: (a) Title 10, United States Code  
(b) DoD Directive 5122.5, "Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, " December 2, 1993 (hereby canceled)  
(c) Executive Order 12958, "Classified National Security Information, " April 17, 1995  
(d) DoD Directive 5230.9, "Clearance of DoD Information for Public Release, " April 2, 1982  
(e) through (q) , see enclosure 1

## A. REISSUANCE AND PURPOSE

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Secretary of Defense by Section 113 of reference (a) , this Directive reissues reference (b) to establish the position of ASD(PA), with responsibilities, functions, and authorities of the ASD(PA) as prescribed herein.

## B. APPLICABILITY

This Directive applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) , the Military Departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Unified Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, and the DoD Field Activities (hereafter referred to collectively as "the DoD Components") .

## C. RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs is the principal staff advisor and assistant to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense for DoD public information, internal information, the Freedom of Information Act, mandatory declassification review and clearance of DoD information for public release, community relations, information training, and audiovisual matters. In the exercise of this responsibility, the ASD(PA) shall:

1. Develop policies, plans, and programs in support of DoD objectives and operations.

2. Ensure a free flow of news and information to the media, the general public, the internal audiences of the Armed Forces, and other appropriate forums, limited only by national security constraints as authorized by reference (c) and valid statutory mandates or exemptions. Enclosures 2 and 3 delineate principles

that guide the Department of Defense with respect to media coverage of DoD activities.

3. Act as the spokesperson and releasing agency for DoD information and audiovisual materials to news media representatives; evaluate news media requests for DoD support and cooperation; and determine appropriate level of DoD participation.

4. Monitor, evaluate, and develop systems, standards, and procedures for the administration and management of approved policies, plans, and programs.

5. Issue policy guidance to the DoD Components.

6. As required, participate with the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) in planning, programming, and budgeting activities.

7. Promote coordination, cooperation, and mutual understanding among DoD Components and with other Federal, State, and local agencies and the civilian community.

8. Serve on boards, committees, and other groups, and represent the Secretary of Defense outside of the Department of Defense.

9. Conduct security reviews, consistent with E.O. 12958 and DoD Directives 5230.9 and 5400.4 (references (c), (d), and (e)), of all material prepared for public release and publication originated by the Department of Defense, including testimony before congressional committees, or by its contractors, DoD employees as individuals, and material submitted by sources outside the Department of Defense for such review.

10. Review for conflict with established DoD and national security policies or programs, official speeches, news releases, photographs, films, and other information originated within the Department of Defense for public release, or similar material submitted for review by other executive agencies of the U.S. Government.

11. Oversee the provision of news analysis and news clipping services for the OSD, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Military Departments' headquarters.

12. As required, prepare speeches, public statements, congressional testimony, articles for publication, and other materials for public release by selected DoD and White House officials.

13. Serve as official point of contact for public and media appearances by DoD officials, and conduct advanced planning and coordination, as required, with private, public, and media organizations for such events.

14. Receive, analyze, and reply to inquiries regarding DoD policies, programs, or activities that are received from the general public either directly or from other Government Agencies. Prepare and provide to the referring office replies to inquiries from the general public that are forwarded from the Congress and the White House.

15. Evaluate and approve:

a. Requests for DoD cooperation in programs involving relations with the public consistent with DoD Directive 5410.18 and DoD Instruction 5410.19 (references (f) and (g)).

b. Requests by news media representatives or other non-DoD personnel for travel in military carriers for public affairs purposes.

16. Establish policy for the Department of Defense Freedom of Information Act Program consistent with 5 U.S.C. 552 (reference (h)) and DoD Directive 5400.7 (reference (i)).

17. Direct and administer the Freedom of Information Act Program consistent with reference (i) and DoD Instruction 5400.10 (reference (j)) , and the access portion of the DoD Privacy Act consistent with DoD Directive 5400.11 (reference (k)) for the OSD, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other DoD Components as may be assigned.

18. Direct and administer the Mandatory Declassification Review Program consistent with E.O. 12958 and DoD Directive 5200.1 (references (c) and (l)) for the OSD, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other DoD Components as may be assigned.

19. Provide DoD assistance to non-Government, entertainment-oriented motion picture, television, and video productions consistent with DoD Instruction 5410.16 (reference (m)).

20. Evaluate and coordinate the DoD response to requests for speakers received by the Department of Defense and, as required, assist in scheduling, programming, and drafting speeches for the participation of qualified personnel.

21. Perform such other functions as the Secretary of Defense may assign.

D. RELATIONSHIPS

1. In the performance of assigned functions and responsibilities, the ASD(PA) shall:

a. Report directly to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense.

b. Exercise direction, authority, and control over the American Forces Information Service in accordance with DoD Directive 5122.10 (reference (n)) .

c. Coordinate and exchange information with other OSD officials, heads of the DoD Components, and Federal officials having collateral or related functions.

d. Use existing facilities and services of the Department of Defense and other Federal Agencies to avoid duplication and achieve maximum efficiency and economy.

e. Maintain liaison with and provide assistance to the general public, representatives of the news media, and private organizations seeking information relating to the activities of the Department of Defense.

2. Other OSD officials and heads of the DoD Components shall coordinate with the ASD(PA) on all matters related to the functions cited in section C., above.

#### E. AUTHORITIES

The ASD(PA) is hereby delegated authority to:

1. Issue DoD Instructions, Publications, and one-time directive-type memoranda, consistent with DoD 5025.1-M (reference (o)) , that carry out policies approved by the Secretary of Defense in assigned fields of responsibility. Instructions to the Military Departments shall be issued through the Secretaries of those Departments, or their designees. Instructions to Unified Combatant Commands regarding public affairs matters shall be issued directly to the Commanders of the Unified Combatant Commands. Instructions that have operational implications shall be coordinated with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, consistent with DoD Directive 5105.35 (reference (p)) .

2. Obtain reports, information, advice, and assistance, consistent with the policies and criteria of DoD Directive 8910.1 (reference (q)), as necessary.

3. Communicate directly with the DoD Components. The channel of communications with the Unified Combatant Commands regarding public affairs matters shall be between the ASD(PA) and the Commanders of the Unified Combatant Commands. Communications that have operational implications shall be coordinated with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff consistent with reference (p) .

4. Communicate with other Government Agencies, representatives of the Legislative Branch, and members of the public.

5. Establish arrangements for DoD participation in those non-DoD Government programs for which the ASD(PA) has been assigned primary staff cognizance.

6. Act as the sole agent at the Seat of Government for the release of official DoD information for dissemination through any form of public information media.

7. Establish accreditation criteria and serve as the approving and issuing authority for credentials for news gathering media representatives traveling in connection with coverage of official DoD activities.

8. Approve military participation in public exhibitions, demonstrations, and ceremonies of national or international significance.

9. In the absence of a known DoD originator of classified information, declassify official information submitted for security review, mandatory declassification review, and in response to Freedom of Information Act (reference (i)) actions.

F. **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Directive is effective immediately.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John P. White', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end.

John P. White  
Deputy Secretary of Defense

Enclosures - 3

1. References
2. Principles of Information
3. Statement of DoD Principles for News Media Coverage of DoD Operations

REFERENCES, continued

- (e) DoD Directive 5400.4, "Provision of Information to Congress, " January 30, 1978
- (f) DoD Directive 5410.18, "Community Relations, " July 3, 1974
- (g) DoD Instruction 5410.19, "Armed Forces Community Relations, " July 19, 1979
- (h) Section 552 of Title 5, United States Code
- (i) DoD Directive 5400.7, "DoD Freedom of Information Act Program, " May 13, 1988
- (j) DoD Instruction 5400.10, "OSD Implementation of DoD Freedom of Information Act Program, " January 24, 1991
- (k) DoD Directive 5400.11, "Department of Defense Privacy Program, " June 9, 1982
- (l) DoD Directive 5200.1, "DoD Information Security Program, " June 7, 1982
- (m) DoD Instruction 5410.16, "DoD Assistance to Non-Government, Entertainment-Oriented Motion Picture, Television, and Video Productions, " January 26, 1988
- (n) DoD Directive 5122.10, "American Forces Information Service, " February 14, 1995
- (o) DoD 5025.1-M, "DoD Directives System Procedures, " August 1994, authorized by DoD Directive 5025.1, June 24, 1994
- (p) DoD Directive 5105.35, "Responsibilities of Unified and Specified Commands in Public Affairs Matters, " May 7, 1965
- (q) DoD Directive 8910.1, "Management and Control of Information Requirements, " June 11, 1993

### PRINCIPLES OF INFORMATION

It is the policy of the Department of Defense to make available timely and accurate information so that the public, Congress, and the news media may assess and understand the facts about national security and defense strategy. Requests for information from organizations and private citizens will be answered in a timely manner. In carrying out this policy, the following principles of information will apply:

1. Information will be made fully and readily available, consistent with statutory requirements, unless its release is precluded by current and valid security classification. The provisions of the Freedom of Information Act will be supported in both letter and spirit.
2. A free flow of general and military information will be made available, without censorship or propaganda, to the men and women of the Armed Forces and their dependents.
3. Information will not be classified or otherwise withheld to protect the Government from criticism or embarrassment.
4. Information will be withheld only when disclosure would adversely affect national security or threaten the safety or privacy of the men and women of the Armed Forces.
5. The Department's obligation to provide the public with information on its major programs may require detailed public affairs planning and coordination within the Department and with other Government Agencies. The sole purpose of such activity is to expedite the flow of information to the public: propaganda has no place in Department of Defense public affairs programs.

STATEMENT OF DOD PRINCIPLES FOR NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE OF DOD OPERATIONS

1. Open end independent reporting will be the principal means of coverage of U.S. military operations.
2. Pools are not to serve as the standard means of covering U.S. military operations. Pools may sometimes provide the only feasible means of early access to a military operation. Pools should be as large as possible and disbanded at the earliest opportunity--within 24 to 36 hours when possible. The arrival of early-access pools will not cancel the principle of independent coverage for journalists already in the area.
3. Even under conditions of open coverage, pools may be appropriate for specific events, such as those at extremely remote locations or where space is limited.
4. Journalists in a combat zone will be credentialed by the U.S. military and will be required to abide by a clear set of military security ground rules that protect U.S. forces and their operations. Violation of the ground rules can result in suspension of credentials and expulsion from the combat zone of the journalist involved. News organizations will make their best efforts to assign experienced journalists to combat operations and to make them familiar with U.S. military operations.
5. Journalists will be provided access to all major military units. Special operations restrictions may limit access in some cases.
6. Military public affairs officers should act as liaisons but should not interfere with the reporting process.
7. Under conditions of open coverage, field commanders should be instructed to permit journalists to ride on military vehicles and aircraft whenever feasible. The military will be responsible for the transportation of pools.
8. Consistent with its capabilities, the military will supply public affairs officers with facilities to enable timely, secure, compatible transmission of pool material and will make these facilities available whenever possible for filing independent coverage. In cases when Government facilities are unavailable, journalists will, as always, file by any other means available. The military will not ban communications systems operated by news organizations, but electromagnetic operational security in battle field situations may require limited restrictions on the use of such systems.
9. These principles will apply as well to the operations of the standing DoD National Media Pool system.